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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000524

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV AND DRL/PHD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: EAID KDEM PGOV PHUM BM

SUBJECT: BURMA HRDF GRANT PROPOSALS

REF: STATE 79965

#### OVERVIEW

**¶1. (U)** Embassy Rangoon submits the four proposals described below in response to reftel request for projects promoting democracy and human rights. The projects were chosen because they directly support U.S. goals in Burma in regard to strengthening civil society and democratic principles. They are small projects which bolster the efforts of local organizations to instill and nurture critical thinking, freedom of expression, and, ultimately, self-determination in a society where these practices have been almost eliminated by 40 years of harsh military rule. Three projects focus on ethnic minority groups while one would work with youth located in Rangoon. All are grassroots projects with potential for long-term benefits beyond HRDF resources.

#### SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES/REQUIREMENTS

**¶2. (SBU)** Because the military government attempts to closely control the activities of all organizations in the country and is suspicious of the motives behind any Western funding, these projects will require careful implementation to avoid endangering the local organizations. While Embassy representatives will be able to occasionally visit the organizations or project sites in conjunction with general Embassy business, and the organizations will be able to provide full accounting for all funding, any overt acknowledgement of the projects as State Department funded activities could jeopardize the local organizations. For this same reason, funding would have to be disbursed in cash rather than bank transfers (which are monitored).

**¶3. (U)** Please direct any questions on the proposals or logistical arrangements to the Embassy point of contact: Political Officer John Haynes. The proposals have been sent by e-mail to EAP/BCLTV, Burma Desk.

**¶4. (SBU)** Begin text of proposals:

#### PROJECT ONE - ETHNIC MINORITY DIALOGUE INITIATIVES

Background: The Metta and Shalom Foundations (local NGO's) recently formed the Ethnic Mediators Fellowship (EMF) ) a group of 25 key persons from various ethnic groups who are directly involved in political mediation in Burma. These individuals are involved in facilitating dialogue within their own ethnic groups in order to develop a greater sense of unity and common vision. The EMF is a key group strategically placed to support dialogue within ethnic groups and collaborative efforts across ethnic lines. Though the overall EMF group is currently being provided with training and consultations, individual ethnic teams are often underfunded and unable to move the dialogue process forward within their own ethnic group.

Goal: Enhance and encourage the dialogue processes within three ethnic groups by assisting with the logistical expenses of the mediator teams.

Budget: \$15,000 for one year.

Expected Outcome: Three ethnic groups will have planned and conducted dialogue sessions within their ethnic communities. The experience gained from these dialogue sessions will inform the groups, thinking about future processes and will assist in establishing dialogue as a means by which conflict can be addressed.

#### PROJECT TWO: SUMMER SCHOOL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Background: Few opportunities exist in Burma for youth to develop the requisite skills to be productive members of a functioning democracy. The formal education program uses only rote memorization and few models exist which promote critical thinking skills. Though the formal educational system has been constrained by the military government policies of the past 40 years, informal mechanisms exist to build these capabilities. One such possibility is through the summer youth camps conducted by private cultural, social, and religious groups. These youth camps already teach ethnic

minority languages, art, music, and other activities. A group of motivated individuals can supplement the existing programs with approaches which enhance creativity and critical thinking skills. Assistance is needed, however, in developing a curricula and training an initial group of teachers to pilot such a program.

Goal: Enhance the creative, critical thinking, and communication skills of youth.

Budget: \$10,000 for one year.

Expected Outcome: Curricula will have been developed, 5 teachers will have been trained, and the curricula tested during the March - May 2004 school holiday.

#### PROJECT THREE - NON-FORMAL CIVIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

Background: There has been growing interest by civic organizations in Burma who are looking for ways to implement a non-formal civic education curriculum in boarding hostels, vocational training programs, summer camp and school programs, as well as other venues. The program desired would teach students about self-governance and participation, conflict resolution, respect for diversity and social responsibility.

The Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT) would like to better develop a civic education curriculum that was developed in the late 1990's, implemented by the Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC). This curriculum continues to be used in the KBC's boarding hostels around the country. MIT proposes to build upon the KBC's civic education curriculum, and make it more broadly available for use by other groups and in other settings. This will require a review of the curriculum and its adaptation to other cultural settings.

MIT has the ability to provide the monitoring, reporting and accounting required for this project, as well as to provide staff to implement the technical aspects of this project, in conjunction with other resources available in the community.

Goal: Revise and update a civic education curriculum and make it available for use in multiple, non-formal education settings in Burma.

Budget: \$10,000 for one year.

#### PROJECT FOUR - KAREN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE CIVIL EDUCATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Background: The Karen Development Committee (KDC) is an unofficially organized, nationwide group of Karen community members who are actively supporting and undertaking programs for the social and political development of all Karen people in Burma. KDC membership draws from all the major regions where Karen people live, as well as all the ethnic subgroups, and religious backgrounds.

Objectives: During 2003-4, the KDC is forming chapters in the five geographic regions where Karen people are concentrated, and is seeking financial assistance to undertake the objectives of:

-- Planning and establishing the KDC regional networks of people in these areas to undertake social organizing, encourage dialogue between intra-ethnic factions, and implement development projects; and

-- Conducting workshops in the regions on topics which could include social organizing; civic education; peace education; planning for development projects; the faces of power; and women and development.

The Karen Development Committee has the capacity to provide for accounting, monitoring and reporting for the use of any funds received.

Budget: US\$15,000 is requested for one year.

End text of proposals.  
Martinez